



Capt. George Atwood

Kentucky Horse Park Mounted Police

George Atwood began his law enforcement career in 1974 as a patrolman with the Woodford County Police Department. He graduated from the Department of Criminal Justice Basic Training Class No. 51. In 1979, Atwood left Kentucky to join the Routt County Sheriff's Office in Colorado, serving as deputy, patrol supervisor, and detective. He returned to Kentucky and the Woodford County police in 1985 until he joined the staff of the DOCJT in 1990. In 1995, Atwood became chief deputy at the Woodford County Detention Center, retiring in 2000. He accepted a position with the Kentucky Horse Park Mounted Police Department in 2002, and was promoted to captain/department head.

WHAT ASPECT OF YOUR LIFE HELPED TO SHAPE YOUR CAREER AS A LAW ENFORCEMENT EXECUTIVE?

It would be the training and leadership roles I have had in my career, the experience gained by attending instructor/training classes at both the FBI academy and Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, being an instructor at DOCJT, and the exposure to different philosophies on training and leadership. Promotions and added responsibilities within the agencies I've worked for, the experience and knowledge gained interacting with people personally and professionally coupled with the supervisory positions, all help to form my ability to effectively lead an agency.

HOW DO YOU, AS A STATE AGENCY, DIFFER FROM A MUNICIPAL AGENCY? SHARE YOUR DUTIES OF WHICH MANY PEOPLE MAY NOT BE AWARE.

Public safety and security to the Kentucky Horse Park, spectators and guests is our primary goal.

The first and most obvious difference would be the governing body, unlike a county or municipal agency where the governing body is the city council or fiscal court. The Kentucky Horse Park is governed by the commonwealth, Kentucky Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet. At 1,200 plus acres, we are the largest state-owned tourist attraction in the commonwealth. The Kentucky Horse Park is a very unique place to work in law enforcement. Simply put, we have the daily population of a small city that is constantly changing. We have more than 100 equine events that will involve as few as one or two thousand spectators in the small shows and events, to our large events that will have 30 to 40 thousand spectators, along with close to 100 non-equine events and a large full-service year-round campground. This equates to more than one million visitors annually to the park. With such a diverse population, it presents very unique challenges to our officers and agency, and makes public relations a critical part of our law enforcement duties.

HOW IMPORTANT IS ATTITUDE, PUBLIC SERVICE AND COMMUNICATION IN YOUR WORK ENVIRONMENT?

Attitude is the most important personal demeanor for anyone. Our attitude governs the way we accomplish any task, and is the basis for everything we do, from job performance to interaction with the people we come in contact with on a daily basis. How we are perceived is influenced by our attitude and professionalism.

Public service is the basis for our profession. We can never forget we are here to serve,

from enforcement to crime prevention, everything we do is service oriented, the public we serve not only expects it, they demand it.

Communication to me is public relations. We, as chiefs and sheriffs, and law enforcement in general, have a tendency to down play the importance of public relations and communicating to the public what we do and why. If the information someone is requesting is not case sensitive or restricted, share the information. It can only help your image. It appeases the person you are talking to, and could gain you valuable information in the future, and improves the perception of your agency with the public.

WHAT IS THE OVERALL THEME OF YOUR DEPARTMENT?

Public safety and security to the Kentucky Horse Park, spectators and guests is our primary goal. While traffic enforcement and crime prevention is our function, we have the added responsibility of ensuring that our guests, have a positive experience during their time at the park, and leave looking forward to returning. We accomplish this by maintaining a highly visible presence and interacting with the public.

Our mounted officers are our most unique resource for public relations and crime prevention and are out as much as possible interacting with our guests. 🐎

